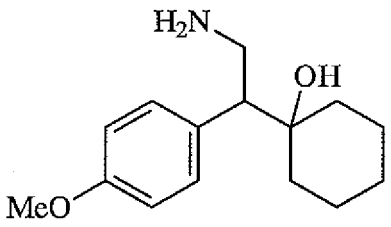
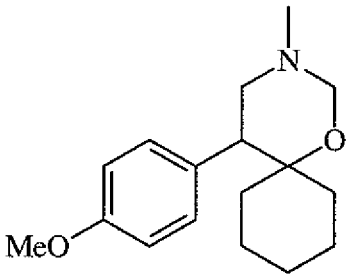
Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) Process for preparing venlafaxine which comprises

(a) converting a venlafaxine precursors selected from the group of *N,N*—didesmethyl venlafaxine of formula (I), a salt thereof, spiro venlafaxine of formula (II) and a salt thereof



(I)



(II)

to venlafaxine in a solution, wherein the conversion is carried out in the presence of a salt of formic acid which is selected from the group of a metal salt or an ammoniu~~i~~m salt of formic acid, and wherein the molar ratio of the salt of formic acid to the venlafaxine precursor is 0.3-10 to 1, and

(b) ~~optionally~~ reacting the solution of venlafaxine with an acid to prepare an acid addition salt of venlafaxine.

2. (Previously Amended) Process according to claim 1, wherein the molar ratio is 0.5-3 to 1.

3. (Previously Amended) Process according to claim 1, wherein the metal salt of formic acid is an alkali or earth alkaline metal salt of formic acid.

4. (Previously Amended) Process according to claim 3, wherein the alkali metal salt of formic acid is a Na, K or Li salt.

5. (Previously Amended) Process according to claim 1, wherein in step (a) *N,N*-didesmethyl venlafaxine (I) or a salt thereof is converted to venlafaxine in the presence of formaldehyde and formic acid.

6. (Previously Amended) Process according to claim 5, wherein in step (a) the *N,N*-didesmethyl venlafaxine (I) is used in form of its HCl addition salt.

7. (Previously Amended) Process according to claim 5, wherein in step (a) the conversion is effected in the presence of also an alkali metal or earth alkaline metal hydroxide or NH_4OH in such an amount that it forms in-situ the salt of formic acid.

8. (Previously Amended) Process according to claim 7, wherein the alkali metal hydroxide is NaOH which forms in-situ Na formiate.